

The aftermath of the Greek Elections: Who voted for who?

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Lots did not vote at all

Of course, the main story, apart from the fact that Syriza won, was that more people than ever before didn't vote at all. Abstention reached a record level of 44 per cent.

Nonetheless, and especially in the light of the HO seminar of 24 November where who voted for Golden Dawn (GD) and why was discussed at length, it is worth asking not only about that party's relative success – it got back in to parliament with seven percent of the vote, but about who did put Syriza back and whether the abstentions helped or hindered it.

As many as 750,000 fewer people voted at all. Syriza lost 320,000 votes, New Democracy (ND) 192,000, To Potami around 150,000 and the Independent Greeks (IG) more than 93,000. The GD lost nearly 9,000 votes, but because it increased its share of the poll, it actually ended up with one more seat in parliament.

Pasok managed to get 52,000 more votes than in January, but largely as a result of allying with Democratic Left and fighting with it under the name 'Democratic Alignment'. And the Centrist Union (CU) – a party that had been considered an underdog in the nineties, increased the absolute number of votes it received by 76,000. This enabled it to enter parliament for the first time. (In terms of shares of the vote, Syriza obtained 36.3% in January and 35.5% in September, whilst ND went from 27.8% to 28.1)

According to a study conducted by [Kapa research](#) (28/09/2015), of those who decided not to vote in September, more than one third of them would have voted for ND, nearly a fifth for Syriza and one sixth for To Potami.

Quite a lot switched

Despite the absolute loss of votes it experienced, ND actually proved better at mobilising its core voters than did any other party – better even than the Communists. One explanation for this might have been that the new ND leader (Meimarakis) came from the grass-roots of the party. However, this was not enough for ND to win. Nonetheless, some five per cent of former ND voters actually swapped to Syriza between January and September – suggesting that Tsipras might have managed to convince some ND voters.

Syriza was less good than ND in bringing out its supporters. Only about three quarters of those who voted for Syriza last time stayed with it. It lost as many voters to ND as it gained from the latter. On the other hand, Syriza did not suffer major losses to Popular Unity (PU), the secessionist party called that was formed from ex-Syriza members. Only six per cent of former Syriza voters went for PU – helping explain why PU got no seats at all in parliament. (PU received only 2.9% of the popular vote – 0.1% below the threshold.) Indeed, Syriza attracted around 14 per cent of former Communist Party voters, 12 percent of former IG voters and 11 percent of former PASOK voters. It also picked up one in five of those who had voted for the KIDESO party of former Pasok leader George Papandreou – a party that did not stand in September at all.

To Potami saw a pretty significant unravelling of its support. It lost almost a quarter of its previous voters to SYRIZA and one sixth to ND. It was definitely a victim of the polarization that occurred in the last weeks before the election. As Syriza transformed itself to a mainstream party representing a pro-Euro stance, To Potami might have lost its comparative advantage. Nor did it manage to stand out as a credible alternative of the ND – the traditional pro-European, neo-liberal party of Greece.

GD lost votes to the two biggest parties, too. Around nine per cent of former GD voters went to ND and a six per cent to Syriza. People also deserted the IG. Roughly one fifth of its voters moved towards ND and more than one in ten went to Syriza. However, the IG did pick up a few votes from former Syriza supporters, and it managed to stay both in parliament and as junior partner in the coalition. PASOK managed to win back people who had voted KIDESO – taking some 60 percent of that party’s former supporters. It also picked up a few from To Potami. The CU, gathered votes this time from all parties, but mainly from the ND.

But otherwise nothing changed much

When we look not at how many voted for each party, but who voted for them, we find little change from what we reported in our earlier blog post. As in January, ND was favoured by businesspeople and pensioners, but it also managed to improve its relative showing amongst the agrarian population. Syriza and the Communist Party were favoured by the unemployed people and students. PU attracted disproportionate support from the financially precarious – a group made up of (small) business and unemployed people. The IG scored well among public employees and people who were not in the labour market at all.

Coming back to GD, all we can do is to repeat that the party was attractive to business people, the agrarian population and the unemployed. Men were nearly twice as likely to vote for it as women. It also appeared to have a particular appeal to younger people. GD tended to attract the votes of people with less education, but so, too did the IG.

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